

A. Malika Begum

Research Scholar

Department of English

Govt. Arts College

Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

malikabgm@gmail.com

Dr. M.S. Zakir Hussain

Assistant Professor

Department of English

Government Arts College

Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

A Cultural Feminist Approach in the Character of Desdemona.

Abstract: Feminism is a collection of Political movement, Ideologies and Social movements that share a common goal. It aims to comprehend the nature of gender difference. It examines women's and convenience Gender role, experiences, interests, chores, and feminist politics in a variety of fields, such as anthropology and sociology, communication, literature, education and philosophy. Feminist theory focuses on analyzing Gender inequality. Themes explored in feminism include favoritism, objectification, subjugation, patriarchy stereotyping and aesthetics.

It establishes, and achieves supporting, profitable, individual, and social equality of sexes. This includes seeking to ascertain enlightening and proficient opportunities for women that are equal

to those for men. Feminist campaigns are generally considered to be a main force behind major historical social changes for women's rights, particularly in the West, where they are commonly endorsed with achieving women's suffrage, Reproductive rights for women and the right to enter into contracts and property. Feminist theory that emerged from feminist movements aims to recognize the personality of gender discrimination by examining women's social roles and lived experience; it's developed theories during a variety of disciplines to retort to problems regarding gender. In 1837, radical French philosopher 'Charles Fourier' invented feminism in writing about the ineradicable link between women's status and social evolution. Abundant feminist movements and ideologies have developed over the years and represent different viewpoints and aims, who talk about feminism through their characters. This paper "a cultural feminist approach in the character of Desdemona" offers an analysis of the character of Desdemona from the speculative construction of feminism.

Keywords: Feminism, assortment, abundant, favoritism, objectification, subjugation, Patriarchy

Feminism is a speculation that man and woman should be equivalent politically, efficiently and communally. This is the core of all feminism theories. Feminism tends to emphasize the repression of women and their place in a male prevailing society. Feminists argue that women are deprived of rights of liberty, equal opportunity, and pronouncement building. They are treated as substandard and reliant on men. Woman is not permitted to elevate her accent. If she raises her tone of voice, it is then silenced by the civilization. Woman is projected to follow the norms and complete the anticipation of the culture. If not, she is frowned and called a transgressor. Cultural Feminism is the theory that there are primary personalities differences sandwiched between men and women, and that woman's differences are particular and should be renowned. This theory of feminism chains the conception that there are organic differences stuck between men and women. For example, "women are kinder and more

temperate than men,” most important to the state of mind that if women ruled the world there would be no wars. Cultural feminism is the theory that wants to conquer chauvinism by celebrating women's extraordinary traits, women's habits, and women's experiences, often believing that the “woman's approach” is the healthier approach.

Women throughout Elizabethan period are unspecified to encompass exhausted their lives in the overhaul of men- approved marriages, child nurture and their responsibility as sexual substance. Shakespeare on the supplementary offer has portrayed women as together objective and focus. Although women were treated as inferior, they were not acceptable to lift up their influence but there were women who regardless of the domination, patriarchy and male supremacy were able to elevate their influence for their privileges. Desdemona is one such character in Othello. She transgressed the conventional restrictions prepared approximately women to incarcerate them. She defied to be enchained in those repressions. She raised her voices with all admiration, laid her case in front of her father and determined to locate at the side of her husband. Though she was a woman of potency but could not break away from the male ascendancy. Desdemona is a sturdy and self-determining woman. She beams for her herself, refused to be compressed under the feet of patriarchy. On the other hand, her situation as a woman prepared her susceptible. Though she asserted her character celebrity but under the collision of a male prevailing society she could not implement her freedom. She was doubted, compressed and not trusted. And ultimately was killed by her cynic husband. Shakespeare has decorated both the norms and opportunity of the society and the presentation and approach of women towards these norms.

In Shakespeare's time women did not have the liberty that is in use for approved today. According to critics this fashioned the portrayal of his disastrous female protagonist Desdemona. The conventional feminist observation of Shakespeare's female temperament is that they have indomitable influential personalities that have been subjugated by traditions and

male dominance. Desdemona is one of those characters who is influential, sturdy and whose implement of her privileges caused her disaster. As Lisa Jardine says,

“Here is a woman’s significant comprehension: personal, household and sexual, requiring to be concealed from public view in the concentration of respectability and diffidence.” (Jardine, 1987)

Shakespeare’s tragic heroine Desdemona was predominantly susceptible to the domination of her society. When she tried to obtain act against it, it resulted in her loss. Desdemona is regarded as a self-determining, willful and resolute to survive her life as she required. She had no suspicions about departing in opposition to her father to get married a Moor in a time when ethnic intolerance was a custom. Lisa Jardine’s “Women as Shrews” theory represents Desdemona as shrew. She describes shrew as a traditional disrupting female, an attentive and liberated female. Desdemona falls beneath this grouping because she stands up to her father. He is against her marrying Othello, but she loves him and desires to conflict with him.

“So that dear lords, if I be left behind

A moth of peace, and he go to war,

The rites for which I love him are bereft me,

And I a heavy interim shall support

By is dear absence. Let me go with him.”

The use of final sentence shows her struggle and an obstinate personality. Instead of asking courteously, she structured him. She is unwavering to plead with anybody to obtain her own approach. In the Elizabethan age women were anticipated to run their family and so had to be capable in that regard. But openly positive women were frowned upon. Jardine herself says, “In Elizabethan age the domineering wife brought shame and humiliation upon her husband” (Jardine, 1987)

Shakespeare wanted Desdemona to be innocent and virtuous but nowhere in the play do we see any sign of her lacking in maturity. She has a child-like innocence, as for instance she pleads for Cassio. This innocence is bound to be proving fatal, and when she persists with it, they are calculated to exasperate a much more slow-tempered man than Othello. Desdemona proves an authentic wife, in spite of all Iagos insinuation to the opposing. And when Othello turns on her in Act 4 Scene 2, accusing her of infidelity, she goes as far as she dare as a trustworthy, obedient wife:

Desdemona: Upon my knees, what doth your speech import?

I understand a fury in your words,

But not the words.

Othello: Why, what art thou?

Desdemona: Your wife, my lord, your true and loyal wife.

Othello: Come, swear it, damn thyself.

Desdemona: Heaven doth truly know it.

She cannot call him a liar without raising his rage, and as a wife she has no other options.

However, when Desdemona knows her husband intends to kill her in Act 5 Scene 2, she resists, attempting to convince Othello not to do immoral, refuting his 'evidence' and finally fighting for her life. But these are the words of an affectionate, faithful wife who is harassed to reinstate truth to their relationship, even as Othello wrongs her. That love protects her husband as she is winded her last inhalation, with her lie to Emilia that she had killed herself so that Othello would not be punished for what he had done. No wife could do more for her husband than she did.

Desdemona first appears in Act 1 Scene 3, where she is related with the traits projected of a devout Christian woman, being faithful, submissive and virtuous. When Cassio awaits her

entrance in Cyprus, he calls her the 'divine Desdemona' and in his wish for her security uses words normally connected with the Virgin Mary:

Hail to thee, lady, and the grace of heaven

Before, behind thee, and on every hand

Enwheel thee round! (Act 2 Scene 1)

Even Roderigo is overwhelmed by Desdemona's holiness: 'She's full of most blessed condition.' (Act 2 Scene 1). According to Catholic practice, believers often prayed to Jesus' mother (due to her superficial sympathy and convenience), for her to intercede on their behalf with her son in paradise. The fact that Desdemona's kindness makes her plead for Cassio echoes this idea.

She is accredited with 'crucial ... excellencies', echoing the Catholic principle of Mary's liberty from original sin due to her own immaculate conception. Two scenes later, Iago refers to Desdemona in terms that Shakespeare's audience would recognize as the actions typical of a Catholic's veneration of Mary: 'contemplation .. graces.. confess .. importune her .. help .. free .. so blessed a disposition' (Act 2 Scene 3).

Desdemona employs saintly words and attitudes herself. When she and Emilia suspect Othello has become envious of her, she exclaims: 'Heaven keeps the monster from Othello's mind.' (Act 3 Scene 4). And when he accuses her of being 'a strumpet' in Act 4 Scene 2, she proclaims, 'No, as I am a Christian.' In the same scene, when Emilia wants to suspend the man who has so maligned her mistress, Desdemona speaks very forgiving of such a traitor: 'If any such there be, heaven pardon him.' Her response to death is to depend on the mercy of Christ, convinced that she is 'guiltless' of the crime Othello suspects. With her vanishing inhalation, lying to Emilia in order to spare Othello his deserved reprimand, she plays the role of a Christian martyr like Stephen, who asked for his murderers to be forgiven. After she is totally blameless of any sin, and Othello realizes what he has completed, he is overwhelmed by the

disparity of his evil proceed and her purity: 'This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven, / And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl,' (Act 5 Scene 2). Desdemona wakes up to find Othello hanging out over her with a sinister gaze on his face. It doesn't take long for her to understand that he's going to murder her. She tries to persuade him that she is blameless, and then begs him to holdup her demise for a few minutes. He refuses and strangles her. But she's not fairly dead yet. When Emilia enters, Desdemona utters with her final breaths that she is blameless, but still refuses to fix the responsibility for her loss on Othello. Desdemona has a child-like innocence. This innocence is bound to prove fatal. Desdemona's love for Othello is profound and strong. She makes a perfect wife because she is totally obedient and self-effacing. This self-effacement makes her divine both while she is living and in her death. It is clear that she becomes a symbol of man's ideal, the supreme value of love.

Thus, the character of Desdemona attributes to those differences unique and greater merits in women. It also encourages edifice a reciprocated women's traditions. Cultural feminists disagree that what they describe as conventional male behaviors, together with violence, competitiveness, and supremacy, are unsafe to the world and to meticulous fields within civilization, including trade and political affairs. Instead, the cultural feminist argues, emphasizing gentle, support, and social equality would make a healthier world. Those who argue that women are physically or innately kinder, compassionate, nurturing, and supportive, also argued then for more addition of women in managerial processes in society and in particular fields surrounded by civilization.

Works Cited

Shakespeare, William. Othello. A Collection of Great Drama. Ed. Tom Smith. Oxford: Globe Theater Press, 2005. 1235-1298. Print.

Alcoff Linda, "Cultural Feminism versus Post Structuralism the identity crisis in Feminist Theory", Istor 1988, The University of Chicago Press, Oct-Nov 2006, p. 406.

Alice Echol "Daring to be Bad; Radical feminism in America, 1967- 75", University of Minnesota Press. P.135-137.

Retrieved from "http://Wikipedia.org/wiki/cultural_feminism".

Retrieved from "<https://www.grin.com/document/305243>".

Simone De Beauvoir, "The Second Sex" (The New English Library, London, 1966) p.155.